

THE ARKANSAS POST GAZETTE

NEWSLETTER OF ARKANSAS POST NATIONAL MEMORIAL, GILLETT, ARKANSAS

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Ghosts of the Past Tour Coming October 28

Saturday, October 28 will be the date for this year's popular *Ghosts of the Past* walk through the Post's historic village site. The theme for 2000 is "*Arkansas Post – Learning from the Past.*"

The program will cover several different historic periods and topics ranging from the 1686 establishment by Henri de Tonty through the 1863 Civil War battle of Fort Hindman/Arkansas Post.

Tours for *Ghosts of the Past* will be offered beginning at 6:30, 7:00, 7:30, and 8:00 p.m., respectively. Reservations are required and may be made by calling the park at 870-548-2207.



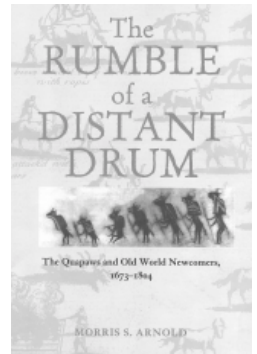
During the 1999 *Ghosts of the Past*, Charles Silsbee of Gillett portrayed store keeper of the French fort.



Della Jamison and Keesa Phillips provided an emotional depiction of the practice of slavery.

Book Signing Draws Crowd of Fans for Arnold's New Work

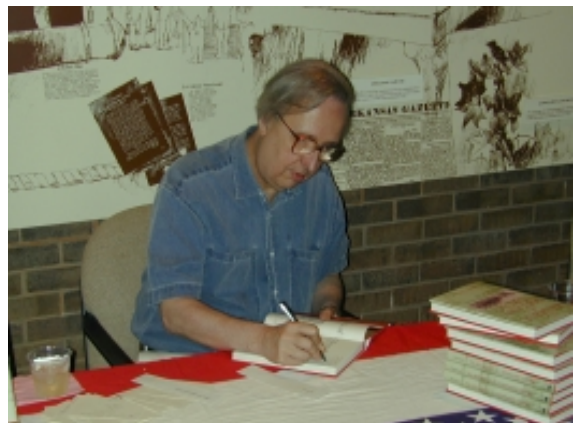
Despite a heavy rain, many a devoted fan of Arkansas Post and the writings of Judge Morris Arnold attended the inaugural book signing for Arnold's newest book on colonial Arkansas.



His third book concerning Arkansas Post prior to 1803, *The Rumble of a Distant Drum – The Quapaws and Old World Newcomers, 1673-1804*, proved a much anticipated documentary of area European and Native American relations.

Prefaced with a brief lecture by the judge, those in attendance quickly formed a line to obtain a personalized autograph and ask questions about his theories and recent findings.

Autographed copies of *Rumble* are available in the Eastern National sales area of the visitor center lobby.



On June 4th Judge Morris Arnold was kept busy as an impressive number of fans came to obtain autographed copies of his newest work concerning the Post of Arkansas during the colonial period.

Superintendent's Scribblin's



While I'm writing this, I'm attending the *Discovery 2000* conference of National Park Service Superintendents in St. Louis. We were told before we came that the conference was to be visionary and was to help guide the agency into the next fifty years. Noted historians, scientists and educators – all who caused me to think reflectively, treated us to sessions. Each in their own way touched our emotions and opened windows into a world of contemplation. Since they are fresh on my mind, I want to share one of the most important views that has developed within me as a result of the conference.

“With each step, I change the world – maybe I should be sure where I'm going.”

Taken out of context this sounds pretty egotistical, but believe me, it applies equally to each and every one of us. It first came to my mind in regards to the multitudes of organisms (living things) that we encounter at every moment of our lives. The countless millions of organisms that inhabit every square inch of ground live in a condition that is dependent on their response to a specific environment. If we compress their environment by stepping on it, we change those conditions and some organisms disappear while others multiply. But, beyond the direct reference, lies a much broader concept. Each of us is unique within this world. Those that came before us fashioned the world in which we live. We, in turn, fashion the world that will serve as our descendants' realm. The little things we do now may have grave consequences for the future.

Our decision to build a road dictates the route people in the future will travel. If we waste our precious resources now, the future may have shortages. Our descendants may be able to live without them, but maybe they won't. We have drastically changed the environment we live in – what have we done to the future? Clearly, I do not have an answer since only time will tell. I can only recommend that we be more cognizant of our actions and their effects. Most of all, we need to be sure that we have purpose in taking the routes we do. We are changing the world no matter what we do and I would like to think it is better for my being here.

Edward E. Wood, Jr.

Events At a Glance

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| October 28 | Ghosts of the Past - <i>Arkansas Post</i> — <i>Learning from the Past</i> . Reservations required. (See Page 1 for more information). |
| November 23 | Thanksgiving Day. Visitor Center will be closed for the holiday. |
| November 26
<i>Arkansas</i> | <i>Maps, Compass, and Scuba Gear - A Visual Understanding of the Changing</i>
<i>Post Landscape: 1686 - 1964</i> . Presented by Brian McCutchen at the Arkansas Post Visitor Center, 2:00p.m. For more information call 870-548-2207. |

Youth Conservation Corps Assists In Keeping Park Going

The Post relies on hiring summer youth to complete projects that the permanent staff would not have time to accomplish. Three youth, through the Youth Conservation Corp (YCC), began employment on June 5 and worked through August 10, when the staff reluctantly terminated them to return to school.

This year's YCC youth were Tyler McCallie, Lydia Perritt and Chase Wallace - all students at Gillett High School. The park certainly got a much larger value from their employment than they received at minimum wage. This is often their first job and it is exciting to see how they mature during the summer.

In addition to helping with grounds maintenance and spring cleaning, they completed two large projects this year — bank stabilization of erosion along the park's trails, and the digitization of all photos, slides and historic documents.

To provide a work leader for YCC, University of Arkansas at Monticello senior student Nolan Moore was hired through the Student Education Employment Program. Nolan lives with his parents at Tillar. Since he has a temporary not-to-exceed one year appointment, we hope to see him throughout the year working on an intermittent basis.



This year's summer workers enjoyed themselves while on a field trip to the Louisiana Cotton Museum and the Poverty Point National Monument.

They are (from left to right) Nolan Moore, Tyler McCallie, Lydia Perritt and Chase Wallace

Fish, fish, and More Fish During Children's Fishing Derby

"I got another one!" was a common shout heard among the young anglers during the Post's annual Children's Fishing Derby. Held June 10, approximately forty young fishing pros from around the area took part in the free event. With participants as far away as Texas, the under age fourteen participants quickly claimed their favorite fishing spot along Park Lake.



Dozens of children participated in this year's Children's Fishing Derby. The stocked lake provided for "good catchin'."

As the lake was stocked just two days before, many children quickly met their limit as the overly eager fish met their fate. As one participant stated proudly, "I threw the hook in, I pull one out. I throw it in again and out comes' another!"

Winners were awarded prizes based upon the weight of the largest fish caught. This year's first place winner was Jenna Lee, a sixth grader at Delta Elementary in Roher.

Congratulations to Jenna and all of the other derby participants!

Rumble On The River!

The rumble of artillery and the crack of rifle fire echoed for miles down the low, flat, Arkansas River Valley the first weekend of June. Union infantry, clad in bright blue and red uniforms, marched in sync, firing both muzzle loading and Henry repeating rifles at enemy forces. Artillery, “bringing up the rear,” fired shot and shell at the enemy defenses of Fort Hindman with great accuracy.

To the delight of observers, the Post’s June Civil War living history weekend proved an educational and “loud” event to be remembered for quite some time. Members of the Eighth Missouri Volunteer Infantry living history unit of St. Louis brought to life both the dullness of camp life and the reality of combat. The impact of weapons of the period was demonstrated with the deafening thunder of artillery, courtesy of the Fort Smith National Historic Site. Fort Smith Ranger Tom Wing provided detailed commentary, while serving as the lead gunner for the artillery crew.

Not all of the demonstrations were combat-based. Civilian volunteers in period dress provided emotional commentary to the devastation of war on the home front of Arkansas Post. Visitors nodded in agreement as volunteers Barbara Prater and Sharon McCutchen portrayed local residents of Arkansas Post who had lost their home and possessions because of Union naval fire. Park volunteer and lay minister Chuck Silsbee provided a camp church service, with instrumental provided by Mr. and Mrs. V.O. Johnson and the First Baptist Church of Gillett choir. The interpretive service, held in the auditorium due to rain, proved popular and overflowing to capacity.

The staff of Arkansas Post thanks all those who made the Civil War event a success. The time and efforts of all participants proved an educational weekend for everyone, and an opportunity for the reenactors to relive history on a battlefield where their unit actually fought.



Union soldiers bearing muzzle-loading rifles observe as two members demonstrate the rapid-fire capability of the Henry repeating rifle.



Garbed in blue, red, and white, many 8th Missouri Zouave members took advantage of shade during the hot June 3-4 weekend.



The "crack" sound of musket fire was a regular feature during infantry demonstrations. Visitors learned about and observed the weapons in action.



Sunday began with a rendition of a Civil War era camp service, led by Post volunteer and lay-minister Charles Silsbee.



Sharon McCutchen of Dumas portrayed a local citizen, concerned with the occupation of Union forces.



Barbara Prater of St. Louis interpreted the contributions made by women during the war.



Visitors learn from Brian McCutchen the differences between the standard Union uniform and that of the Zouave units.



The thunder of artillery echoed down the Arkansas River Valley, causing much surprise to area residents and fishermen located just off of the Post's shoreline. A bronze model 1843 field gun was provided as courtesy of Fort Smith National Historic Site.



A company encampment provided visitors a glimpse at the daily, and often boring routine of camp life.

Post's Resource Management Specialist Provides A Year In Review

Although the calendar year still lacks a few months, the federal fiscal year (FY) ends in September. Several projects and/or studies have been initiated, are underway, or have been completed, at the Post this past FY including the following: An Assessment Of Tick-Borne Disease Frequency And Vector-Host-Vegetation Relationships (see last issue); Water Quality; American Alligator Habitat Utilization, Seasonal Movements, And Nesting Characteristics; Herpetofauna Inventory; Seasonal Density And Vegetative Impacts Of White-tailed Deer; A Forest Inventory; Forest Ecosystem Ecology; Historical Landcover Changes At The Memorial Unit; and Bank Stabilization Of Alligator Slough.

These projects and/or studies are of benefit to the park in that they provide valuable information that will support current or future management decisions as well as provide pertinent baseline data, which can be compared to data from future projects. In this way, Arkansas Post National Memorial is subjected to something like a check and balance system that ensures "the perpetual conservation of the resources therein," as mandated by law, for you, the public.

Other projects, similar to the White-tailed deer, American Alligator, and Tick-Disease Assessment, provide not only critically needed extant data for mandates and management decisions, but also provides for employee, public and resource safety. For instance, the ongoing Tick-Disease Assessment



A study of the Post's American alligator population is but one of the many projects currently underway.

will ultimately give the park knowledge of the occurrence and frequency of lyme disease and ehrlichiosis.

The upcoming FY 2001 holds many prospective projects in natural and cultural resource management for the Post.

Proposals "in the works" include, but are not limited to: Historical Landcover Changes At The Osotouy Unit; Cultural Remnant Delineation, Through GPS/GIS Technologies, at both the Osotouy and Memorial Units; Deer Herd Health and Seasonal Movement Patterns; Bank Stabilization of Park Lake; Invasive Exotic Delineation And Management; Herpetofaunal Assemblage Inventory; Exotic Plant Species Inventory; Avian Survey and Inventory; and Snag Utilization, Recruitment And Mortality. Each of these projects will be described in upcoming issues as they come "on-line."

Arkansas Post provides an exhilarating opportunity for me to learn about this area's unique biota while providing information to management and the public. If you have seen, or see me, moving throughout the park with wires, backpacks, poles, "flags", or other paraphernalia that "looks really weird," not to worry, I haven't lost my mind *YET*, I am more than likely collecting data for one of the aforesaid projects.

I look forward to completing these many projects and initiating many more as well as relaying their information to you, the public. Hopefully you will find them as useful and intriguing as I do.



Long, Hot Summer of Projects For Post Maintenance Division

Thankfully, it appears as though the hot and dry weather *maybe* showing signs of weakening. The hard working employees of the Post's maintenance division rarely have the benefits of air conditioning, making the summer long and hard. In response to the excessive temperatures, heat-related safety precautions were followed to prevent the dangerous ailments of heat exhaustion or heat stroke.

Despite the heat, numerous projects have been accomplished, with erosion control proving the priority. More than eighty feet of an old wooden retaining wall, parallel to historic Main Street, was removed and replaced with a new wall system. Following, in cooperation with the resource management division, several hundred feet of limestone rip-rap was placed along the bluff bank of Post Bayou to offset bank deterioration caused by water current and animal intrusion.

Additional projects tackled include the sealing of cracks on the asphalt nature trail, the removal of hazardous limbs and trees, and mowing. Early season thunderstorms, combined with warm weather, kept those with mowing duties on a seemingly constant goal of "catching-up." The frantic pace of mowing slowed dramatically when the seasonal rains came to a halt and the present drought set in.

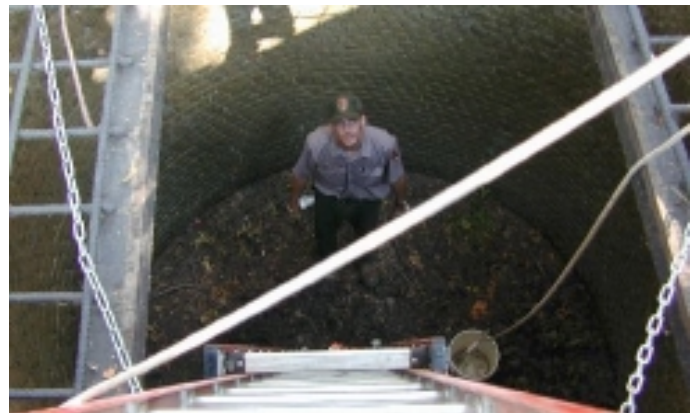
Some projects, however, could not be completed because of the hot, dry weather. The reroofing of the ranger residence has been delayed until the end of September when temperatures *should* be more conducive for such a project. However, the weather's delay of regular outdoor projects has allowed for the advancement of projects that have been pushed aside due to lack of time.



Stone-by-stone, 144,000 pounds of rock were placed along a several hundred foot stretch of bayou shoreline.

According to Chief of Facility Management, Charles Layton Mattmiller, "All trees are showing signs of severe stress because of the lack of rainfall and the hundred-plus degree temperatures. You would think that Jack Frost has shown up by the amount of leaves that have fallen. However, I have been told not to be too alarmed, that this is just a way that some trees have of protecting themselves by going dormant – or at least trying to. Next spring and summer a more accurate account of actual drought damage can be assessed."

"With the change of the seasons, our workload will still remain full. All that will change are the titles of the tasks."



It's not always easy being the "new guy!" New Post maintenance employee Chase Robertson peers from the bottom of the "bottomless" Notrebe' cistern during it's annual cleaning.

Modern Day Voyagers

Visit Post on 28,000 Mile Journey

Virtually all visitors to the Post today come by some form of motorized vehicle; car, truck, sometimes motorboat. However, two adventurous Midwesterners recently paid the national memorial a visit using a similar vehicle as the voyagers of two centuries ago – canoe. What makes their visit unique is that the Post was simply a two-day stopping off point for a much larger goal – entry into the Guinness Book of World Records.

Robert Carpenter, 31, and Jared Jellison, 26, both natives of the Kansas City area, intend to canoe a total of 28,044 miles, one mile more than the current record set in 1983. The endeavor began at Kansas City's Berkley Park on May 26, with an anticipated project voyage length of four years.

According to Jellison, "It's amazing paddling into such a historic area, much as they did more than a hundred years ago. Visiting Arkansas Post has been well worth the detour up the canal." Park staff believes that the explorer's ability to relax in air conditioning during the 105-plus degree-days was an additional factor for their well-expressed appreciation of hospitality!

Those interested in following the exploits of the canoeing duo can follow their progress by visiting www.longestcanoejourney.org.



World record hopefuls, Jared Jellison and Robert Carpenter canoed from Kansas City to Arkansas Post.



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